REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8, 9, 11-14, 22-26, and 28-33 remain pending in the present application. Claims 4 and 22-23 are indicated as having been withdrawn from prosecution at this time, pursuant to the Election of Species Requirement issued by the Examiner on April 22, 2003.

The proposed amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 is submitted to more specifically describe the claimed multiple component meltblown fibers. No new matter is added.

Entry of the amendment is requested under 37 CFR 1.116, since the amendment narrows the scope of the claims and raises no new issues which would require further search or consideration by the Examiner. In the alternative, entry of the amendment is requested in order to place the claims into better form for consideration on appeal.

Election of Species Requirement

Previously withdrawn claims 17-21 have been canceled. Claims 4, 22 and 23, which were the subject of the Election of Species requirement have been amended to exclude reference to non-elected species.

Reconsideration of the Election of Species Requirement is respectfully requested.

Nature of the Present Invention

The present invention is directed to multiple component meltblown webs and composite sheets containing such meltblown webs, wherein the meltblown fibers are multiple component fibers consisting of non-elastomeric polymers. A first polymer component is a blend of non-elastomeric polymers selected from the group consisting of various specified polyolefins, polyesters, polyamides, polystyrene, fluoropolymers, olefinic ionomer resins, random co-polymers of ethylene and methacrylic acid, and random co-polymers of ethylene and vinyl acetate, and the second polymer component is selected from a single polymer which is either a polyolefin or a polyester.

Applicants believe the amendment makes clear that the multiple component meltblown fibers are limited to those non-elastomeric polymer components.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Shawyer et al. in view of Newkirk et al.

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 8, 9, 11-14, 24-26, and 28-33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Shawyer et al. in view of Newkirk et al. Applicants traverse

this basis for rejection and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

Applicants reiterate their previous comments in traverse of the application of the cited references as to the claims, and believe that the amendment submitted herewith clarifies the distinction over those references.

Specifically, Applicants submit the amended claims now make clear that the blended component B of Shawyer et al., which contains an elastomer, cannot be said to either anticipate or make obvious the claims. The elastomeric polymer component of the Shawyer et al. blends cannot be present in the presently claimed invention.

At page 3 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner explains that it would have been obvious to substitute the non-elastic polymer blends of Newkirk et al.'s first polymer component for the elastomer-containing blend of component A of Shawyer et al. The Examiner states:

> By modifying the type of material in the second component B [of Shawyer et al.] by using the non-elastomeric polymers taught by Newkirk *will not destroy the Shawyer et al. reference since there is enough motivation for this modification in the Newkirk reference that will benefit the product of Shawyer et al.* By providing the second component B of Shawyer et al. with nonelastic polymer components the multicomponent polymeric strands produced will have better spinning, bonding and strength characteristics and will increase the abrasion resistance of these. (Emphasis added).

According to the present amendment, the blends of Newkirk et al. no longer fall within the scope of the claims. Newkirk et al. disclose that their blends must contain "a select blend of specific grades of polyethylene and polypropylene" (col. 3, lines 17-21); in particular "a polypropylene polymer with a melt flow rate of greater than 20 g/10 min" (col. 4, lines 1-4); or "propylene co- and/or ter-polymers" (col. 4, lines 18-21). The present claims do not permit the use of propylene homopolymers or copolymers in the first polymer blend. As such, no *prima facie* case of obviousness can be said to exist.

In view of the foregoing, allowance of the above-referenced application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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